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Communications Office  
Office of the President and Vice President  
Michele J. Crank  
Mihio Manus  
928.871.7000

## **PRESIDENT BEGAYE APPLAUDS FUNDING AWARD FOR SEVEN BIE SCHOOLS ON THE NATION, YET STATES, ‘THERE REMAINS WORK TO BE DONE’**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Regarding the Bureau of Indian Education’s announcement of 10 BIE schools eligible for replacement, seven of which are on the Navajo Nation, Navajo President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez lauded the announcement as a great step in the right direction toward replacing or renovating schools in dilapidated conditions.

“Many of our schools on the Navajo Nation were built years ago and many need to be renovated or replaced with new facilities,” President Begaye said. “Our children deserve to be educated in facilities that are safe and conducive to learning. We need facilities that our students and their parents will be proud of. They deserve new buildings.”

The president said that the Bureau of Indian Education has been one of the Nation’s strongest partners in providing education to Navajo children. Within the Begaye-Nez Administration, education for our children is a top priority—an area in need of constant improvement.

With this announcement, the Nation can look forward to safer, healthier and hazard-free facilities for Navajo students.

“We appreciate the attention and support from Secretary Jewell and Acting Assistant Secretary Larry Roberts on this issue. However, there remains work to be done to ensure our Native youth receive the high-quality education they deserve,” said Vice President Nez. “Our leaders signed a treaty in 1868 that required our students to be sent away to schools, now in 2016 we want to work with the BIE and local states to ensure these schools are at the very least on par with and ideally exceeding the level of performance of other schools across the nation.

Both President Begaye and Vice President Nez said funding to replace old and crumbling facilities is a much-needed step forward.

On behalf of the Navajo Nation, the Begaye-Nez Administration extends their gratitude to the school boards, parents, school administrators and tribally elected leaders for their tireless effort in advocating for new facilities that will benefit Navajo students.

The Bureau of Indian Education funds 66 schools in the Navajo Nation. Currently, 28 of the 66 BIE funded schools on the Navajo Nation are categorized in “poor” condition. This school replacement announcement will reduce number of schools in “poor” condition to 21.

The following schools will get new facilities: Jones Ranch Community School, Crystal Boarding School, Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community School, Greasewood Community School, Lukachukai Boarding School, T’iis Nazbas Community School and To-nalea Day School.

“It is great news to hear that seven Navajo communities will receive new schools that will meet the standard for educational buildings,” President Begaye said. “That’s part of learning and part of being proud of a community that values education.”

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